

AGENDA

Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law and Affirmative Action in State Agencies

June 25, 2008, 2:00 pm, Room 410, The Capitol

1. Review of Minutes of May 19 meeting
2. CHRO operations subgroup draft recommendations
3. Next meeting

Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law & Affirmative Action in State Agencies MEETING MINUTES May 19, 2008 Meeting

PRESENT: Teresa Younger, Julia Evans Starr, Michelle Duprey, Debi Freund, Dawne Westbrook, Eric Coleman, Sharon Gaddy, Glenn Cassis, Alice Pritchard, Stacy Walsh, David Metzger, Barbara Collins, Kia Murrell, Jeff Beckham

STAFF: Adam Jeamel (Governor's Office)

GUESTS: Ray Pech, Jim O'Neill, Robert Brothers, Jr., Gloria Mengual, John Lobon, Andrew Norton. There were three members of the public also present at the meeting.

I. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Minor changes were made to the minutes from the April meeting of the Advisory Group. Advisory Group members signed-off on the minutes with the appropriate changes noted. The Advisory Group set a deadline of Labor Day for sending recommendations to the Governor. The next meetings are scheduled for June 18, 2008 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm and July 9 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.

II. DIVERSITY SURVEY:

Angela Rola was not able to attend the meeting. Therefore, the presentation by Angela regarding the diversity survey was postponed. The Advisory Group agreed to discuss recommendations to be made to the Governor regarding the operations of CHRO at their June meeting. The July meeting will be set aside to discuss recommendations for diversity training and compliance and recommendations on affirmative action (including updating the regulations).

III. CHRO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Ray Pech, joined by Robert Brothers and Jim O'Neill, delivered his report – from the Executive Director point-of-view – regarding CHRO. Mr. Pech gave a detailed assessment of the “Commission’s structure” and how it prevents and/or allows the agency to work efficiently and effectively. However, he emphasized that the potential problems with the structure of CHRO would exist irrespective of the individuals currently serving as Commissioners. Mr. Pech also explained that there are deep divisions among the Commissioners on several issues – many arose during the term of the last executive director.

Mr. Pech told the Advisory Group that serving as the agency’s executive can be exceedingly difficult for many of the reasons he outlined for the group. He made several recommendations to the Advisory Group to improve the Commission structure, including reducing the number of Commissioners to a more workable number; require individual Commissioners to have specific backgrounds; give statutory authority for a legislative appointing authority to remove his or her appointee; and resolving the issue of what functions should the Commissioners have on a daily basis.

Mr. Pech stressed his concern over the lack of communication that occurs between Commissioners and their appointing authority. He concluded his remarks by saying that referees appointed by the Governor should remain independent and should not be subject to – in terms of evaluations to the views of the executive director.

Questions asked of Mr. Pech included how many Commissioners does he suggest to serve on CHRO; do Commissioners represent certain constituencies; what should be the proper role of the Commission; do the Commissioners go through any training; how does CHRO compare to similar agencies in other states; are there operating protocols or bylaws to deal with role distinction; is there an orientation-like package given to new Commissioners; and if you could reorganize the agency, what would you do?

IV. MEMBERS OF THE CHRO:

Andrew Norton, Gloria Mengual and John Lobon each gave their own perspective and recommendations – as Commissioners – when it comes to the structure of CHRO and how to make it more efficient, more effective and more accountable.

Recommendations from the three Commissioners included: adding staff in the contract compliance unit (Norton); implementing a centralized, coordinated effort for outreach at job fairs, etc to recruit more minorities (Norton); create an ombudsman position to hear and resolve issues within the agency (Norton); professional search team should conduct the search for a new executive director (Mengual); mandate limits to the number of years a Commissioner can serve (Mengual); conduct orientation and training not only for new Commissioners but the existing Commissioners as well (Mengual); and other recommendations.

Mr. Lobon concluded the testimony of the CHRO Commissioners with the following recommendations: CHRO should be taken down and rebuilt; Commission should not have a government employee appointed to it; appointment of Commissioners should not be handled by five people and there should not be any worry over repercussion; should be a better line of communication between affirmative action units for different agencies; there should be a mixture of people with different backgrounds – not all should be attorneys; and need people who have a passion for the issues that CHRO is responsible for addressing.

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